

**Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned: Stakeholder Summit**  
**March 10, 2006**  
**Executive Summary of Facilitator's Summary**

On March 10, 2006 the Under Secretary for Preparedness of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), George Foresman, hosted a meeting that involved over sixty representatives from state Governor's offices, state offices of homeland security and emergency management, tribal associations, intergovernmental, law enforcement and first responder national associations with significant interest in disaster preparedness and response. The meeting also included select DHS and White House staff. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the White House Report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Report) and solicit input from the participants on implementing the recommendations

In preparation for the meeting, DHS, culled recommendations from the Report that could be quickly enacted (prior to June 1, 2006) and organized them into 15 Specific Action categories for discussion. Participants spent the day, in plenary and breakout group sessions facilitated by Meridian Institute, identifying overarching key issues and critiquing time-sensitive recommendations.

Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security; Dave Paulison, Acting Under Secretary of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and Ken Rapuano, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security attended the afternoon plenary session and participated in a discussion of the most critical issues identified during the day.

<b>Key Issues</b>
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The following key issues were highlighted during the day-long meeting.

- [Partner Actively with State, Local, and Tribal Partners at Every Step](#)
- [Clarify Roles, Responsibility, and Authority At All Levels, particularly the PFO and FCO](#)
- [Focus on Unified Command for all Levels of Government Leadership](#)
- [Revise the NRP as Little as Possible; Improve Training and Exercising To Increase Awareness and Utility Of The Plan.](#)
- [Do Not Federalize Emergency Response](#)
- [Re-Establish Regional Focus](#)
- [Focus on Planning that is Relevant to Each State or Region](#)
- [Improve and Harmonize the Emergency Management Assistance Compact \(EMAC\)](#)
- [Utilize Funding Incentives](#)
- [Solidify and Improve the Process for Disaster Assistance Coordination and Reimbursements](#)

***Partner Actively with State, Local, and Tribal Partners at Every Step.*** This includes development and implementation of recommendations, particularly as they impact the National Response Plan (NRP). The non-federal partners identified a need for specific involvement mechanisms (e.g., inclusion on NRP review team) and would like agencies and the White House to assume a *partnership* (not parenting) model for federal – state relationships. In addition, there is a clear need for federal agencies to organize and talk with each other so they can then integrate well with ongoing state and local efforts. Participants stressed that federal review of state

preparedness and response plans (e.g., evacuation plans), should occur once per year in an integrated fashion rather than in series with different agencies conducting independent and non-integrated reviews. For example, Department of Transportation and Department of Justice reviews of transportation and evacuation plans appear to be cumbersome and not adding real value.

***Clarify Roles, Responsibility, and Authority at All Levels.*** Participants identified clarifying deployment roles between federal, state, local, and tribal officials; between government and volunteers; and among federal government agencies as a key near-term issue for resolution. The role most needing clarification was that of the Principal Federal Official (PFO). Meeting participants recommended early designation of the PFO, along with advanced placement in the region and conferral of authority to commit federal resources. Some thought that the DHS was going to establish its own regions and, if that was to be the case, then the DHS Regional Director should also be the PFO in the case of emergency declarations on that scale. Participants also noted that DHS should not form a new set of regions but rather use the FEMA regions already in place. Confusion about the role of the PFO versus that of the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) must be resolved prior to the June 1 beginning of hurricane season. There were differing beliefs for exactly how the PFO and FCO roles should be delineated, but most saw no reason to tamper with the FCO as it was used in the pre-NRP days under FEMA.

***Focus on Unified Command for All Levels of Government Leadership.*** Participants concurred with the Report that the goal for disaster response communications is the ability to support unified command: informed, coordinated command and control decisions by state, local, and federal decision-makers. However, they urged DHS to remember that local authorities do not have a chain of command that mirrors the federal government command structure. For instance, governors do not work for the President, and the mayors do not work for the governors. The response system must work with intergovernmental coordination, not a strict federal chain of command. Seamless and effective command and control in the face of multiple jurisdictions can only be achieved through common operating pictures gained from reliable communication and information systems. Rapidly deployable communications systems that make use of staging points to compensate for distance and remoteness of operations are key as is a full understanding of the reporting structure.

***Revise the NRP as Little as Possible; Improve Training and Exercising To Increase Awareness and Utility Of The Plan.*** Although it is clear that some changes and modifications should be made to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to the NRP, participants stressed that the federal government should refrain from large scale revision and revamping. They suggested that DHS clarify critical roles and responsibilities and address the gap in understanding *how* to implement the plan. Constant change and revision is confusing and prevents responders and decision-makers from being trained to competency in roles and responsibilities.

Participants recommended the following immediate actions related to the NRP:

- Develop among personnel from federal departments and agencies in-depth understanding of the NRP and protocols for intergovernmental coordination.

- Develop “job aids” and check lists to help ensure that the NRP roles, functions, and implementation are understood and operational at the state and local level.
- Participate in “table-top” exercises with non-federal officials to clarify Emergency Support Function (ESF) roles and to establish and test communication and coordination among states, Joint Field Offices (JFO), and the Principle Federal Official (PFO) for each region.
- Develop a more robust NRP/NIMS training program for state, tribal and locals, such as a national train-the trainer program to enhance awareness and implementation at the state and local levels.

***Do Not Federalize Emergency Response.*** Several participants emphasized that the current system of staged emergency response—tribal, local, state, then federal involvement, depending on the scale of an event—is generally effective and appropriate because tribal, local and state emergency response staff understand local conditions, needs, and priorities in an emergency. According to some, the Report has created a perception that the federal government desired to take on greater responsibility for emergency response. For example, the language regarding a fully trained and manned National Guard gives the impression that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) would command National Guard troops in emergency response operations. State governors feel strongly that they should retain command over National Guard troops during emergency response operations. DHS and White House participants clarified that while the Report does examine ways to improve the federal response to emergencies, there is no intent to increase the federalization of emergency management and response. Primary responsibility is intended to remain with state, local, and tribal governments. Participants suggested that a conference call chaired by the National Governors Association would be a useful forum in which to clarify the White House position and address governors’ concerns. Secretary Chertoff concurred that the process should not be federalized, but was also concerned that the overall system should be improved to ensure that when the federal government is called on for assistance; it is enabled to perform effectively.

***Re-Establish Regional Focus.*** Participants described the importance of the development of DHS regions and regional JFO’s in improving on-the-scene operations. A regional system is critical but infrastructure must be in use day-to-day for the system to be effective when large-scale events arise. The group stressed that new regional structures should overlay what is already there and that DHS should build on existing FEMA regions and their functions; strengthening them to eliminate gaps. Further, DHS should act immediately to implement regional structures because states are forming their own regions in the absence of federal leadership. Timely action and implementation on DHS’s part would reduce formation of unnecessary and redundant functions and eliminate the resulting overlap and confusion.

***Focus On Planning That Is Relevant To Each State Or Region.*** Participants urged DHS to allow states to focus their limited resources on preparedness and response planning most relevant to their particular situations (for example, participants noted that many states are highly unlikely to ever need evacuation plans so they should use their preparedness resources elsewhere). In addition, weaknesses in evacuee placement and reception during Hurricane Katrina also underscored the need for states to have coordinated reception and care plans which are exercised well in advance of catastrophic events. Participants suggested developing in advance, and submitting to DHS, plans for receiving a certain number of evacuees. Participants also

recommended development of a central system for reporting location and movement of evacuees. Participants cautioned that local agencies and volunteers may refuse to participate in the future if these deficiencies are not corrected.

***Improve and Harmonize the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).*** An effective EMAC is preferable to self-deployment. However, time delays and fragmented service can result in secondary disasters, as was experienced during the response to Hurricane Katrina. Coordination cannot occur in the heat of the moment; it must be planned well in advance. Hundreds of communities offered resources through EMAC, but lack of advanced planning and poor understanding of implementation issues resulted in a bottleneck. As a result, many of those resources were not deployed in a timely or effective way. Participants felt strongly that DHS should provide guidance to the states on harmonizing their resource definitions with FEMA's as one way to make EMAC more effective. There is a significant training gap around the EMAC; it works well but people do not understand it. If resources are well organized, local resources could be used to backfill from areas not affected by the disaster. For example, law enforcement rapid-response-teams could be organized and deployed on a rolling basis from states/areas not affected by the disaster.

***Utilize Funding Incentives.*** DHS funding to states is largely obligated by the time a state receives the monies. It is therefore difficult to quickly adjust to changing mandates from the federal government. Participants stressed that DHS should not place additional planning requirements on state, local, or tribal entities without providing additional resources. Participants strongly suggested that DHS consider offering incentives for compliance with the NRP and other federal requirements versus penalties for non-compliance. Threats to withhold funding from states which do not produce adequate evacuation plans are not viewed by the states as either productive or credible. Participants believed that some changes in funding issues would improve preparedness and response, particularly in the short term. Those changes include changing the funding formula from being based on terrorism threats and contingencies and move toward a true all-threat, all-hazards formula. States' basic FY06 funding should be released now instead of waiting until mid-year.

***Solidify And Improve the Process For Disaster Assistance Coordination And Reimbursements.*** Creating a one-stop Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) would require a close look at the types of services that are reimbursable. During the Katrina response, state-federal coordination was effective with regard to prescription drugs, transfer of Medicaid, and immunization registries. A more effective process should be put in place so that the same or better response can occur every time it is needed. After Katrina, states experienced shifting federal policy where states incurred significant costs in one week that were not considered reimbursable the next. Regional staff were not informed or empowered to provide information on how to offer or deploy assistance.

Participants addressed current regulatory funding constraints which severely limit or prevent federal "reimbursement" of state, local, and tribal expenses for preventative or anticipatory preparedness actions. A significant question remains regarding how states will fund repeated episodes of getting prepared for a potential disaster that does not materialize (as sometimes occurs). Secretary Chertoff agreed this was a troublesome limitation that DHS was examining. In the near term, he felt that DHS and states needed to work together to determine what actions could be delayed until 24-48 hours before an event and what anticipatory actions absolutely

needed to be executed (such as preparing hospitals and nursing homes). He indicated that an integrated decision approach should reduce some of the later, post-incident controversy over reimbursements.

### ***Other Issues, Suggestions and Concerns***

- The private sector should be involved in response planning (e.g., companies such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot that have exemplary supply chain, logistics, and dispatch resources).
- The DHS team putting together the recommendation matrix should look at the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center after action reviews (AAR)s for additional lessons learned, particularly the many things done right.
- All institutions involved must carefully evaluate the capacity of tribes to respond to emergencies, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of various state and federal agencies related to working with the tribes.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Under Secretary Foresman thanked the participants for their thoughtful analysis and candid responses. He expressed appreciation that the group focused on the way ahead while drawing on but not limiting themselves to what has happened in the past. He committed to the participants that they will continue to be involved as true partners. Under Secretary Foresman stated that the path forward did not include reinventing national preparedness and recovery, but would focus on continuing down the preparedness continuum and incorporating the lessons identified following Hurricane Katrina.

Dr. Michael Lesnick, lead Meridian facilitator, reviewed the key commitments and action items from the meeting:

1. Meridian Institute will draft a meeting summary for the Under Secretary to distribute to all participants.
2. DHS will distribute electronic copies of the materials from this meeting (including a table identifying all the ESFs and which federal agency is the lead).
3. States and other entities who were conducting their own reviews and lessons learned will send copies of their reports/AARs to Tina Gabbrielli at DHS.
4. DHS will finalize a plan for continuing to work with meeting participants on developing and implementing recommendations, including a plan for convening “tiger” teams of federal and state personnel to work implementation of specifically identified short-term actions/recommendations.
5. Under Secretary Foresman will send his recommendations regarding release of FY06 funding to Secretary Chertoff by Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.
6. Undersecretary Foresman will include effective implementation of these recommendations in his performance contracting with Secretary Chertoff.

Following additional expression of thanks for participation and hard work, Under Secretary Foresman adjourned the meeting.

**Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned: Stakeholder Summit**  
**March 10, 2006**  
**Facilitator's Summary**

On March 10, 2006, the Under Secretary for Preparedness of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), George Foresman, hosted a meeting to discuss the White House Report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, and (the Report). This was the first in what is envisioned as a series of discussions to actively involve DHS partners in the decision-making process related to improving federal preparedness and response to disasters. The meeting involved over sixty representatives from state Governor's offices, state offices of homeland security and emergency management, tribal associations, intergovernmental, law enforcement, and first responder national associations with significant interest in disaster preparedness and response along with selected DHS and White House staff including Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security; Dave Paulison, Acting Under Secretary of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and Ken Rapuano, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security.

This summary reflects the key issues addressed by participants chronologically during the course of the plenary and break out groups during the course of the Summit.

<b>Morning Plenary – Opening Remarks from Senior DHS and White House Personnel</b>
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**George Foresman, Under Secretary for Preparedness, DHS** welcomed participants to the Summit and thanked everyone for making the effort to attend on short notice. While apologizing for the time constraint he stated that it was his intent to initiate consultations with DHS state, local and tribal partners as soon as possible after the release of the White House Katrina Report. Under Secretary Foresman noted that a summary from the Summit would be developed by the Meridian Institute facilitators and that it would outline the key issues discussed in a non-attribution format.

Under Secretary Foresman stated that he is responsible for directing the team effort to put together an after action report (AAR) of the federal response to Katrina. He noted that DHS will partner with a wide range of stakeholders, including from local, state, tribal, and federal organizations and agencies as well as from private sector and non-governmental organizations to refine and implement recommendations for improving national preparedness and response to natural and manmade disasters. Under Secretary Foresman described the Report as reflecting a comprehensive understanding of what happened before, during, and after Katrina's landfall and clearly stated that although the recommendations are strong, some need a great deal more discussion as the interagency and partner review process unfolds.

The Under Secretary described the meeting as a triage session in which the participants' fresh perspective was highly valued. He asked that they draw upon their experience and perspective to make particular note of problem areas, blind spots, or other issues the White House and DHS might not have considered while preparing the recommendations, especially as it relates to a

coordinated approach to implementation. Under Secretary Foresman also stressed that this meeting was the first step in a cooperative effort.

Under Secretary Foresman noted that the Hurricane Andrew AAR listed many of the same lessons as those in the Hurricane Katrina Report even though Katrina was a much larger event. He stressed that the nation must act on the lessons this time so they do not have to be re-identified after each disaster in the future. Under Secretary Foresman noted that the lessons contained in the Report will also be critical to the development of DHS as it matures into a department that can and does respond well in any number of disasters and threat situations.

At the conclusion of his comments, Under Secretary Foresman committed to making performance on these issues part of his contract with Secretary Chertoff. While he acknowledged there is a lot to learn and change on the heels of Hurricane Katrina, Under Secretary Foresman stated his belief that many things were done well. This meeting would be the start of a working partnership among state, local, tribal, and federal levels to fix those things that must work better in the future. He introduced Dr. Michael Lesnick, senior partner at the Meridian Institute and lead facilitator for the meeting who reviewed the meeting objectives as outlined by Under Secretary Foresman, introduced the Meridian facilitation team, and provided an overview of the Summit agenda and approach (see Appendix A).

**Joel Bagnal, White House Homeland Security Council**, introduced himself and his team as the authors of the Report. He stressed that the point of the Summit was to listen carefully to the meeting participants because they represent the “chief implementers” of disaster preparedness and response. Mr. Bagnal noted that the federal government has a history of “identifying lessons but not of learning from and implementing those lessons.”

**Tina Gabbrielli, Director of Contingency Planning and Support Division, DHS**, began her remarks by saying that although the Report focuses on the federal response to disasters, true preparedness demands a national response, not simply a federal one. According to Ms. Gabbrielli, on September 15, 2005, President Bush ordered a comprehensive review of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina. The review included extensive information gathering and vetting with federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private sector entities and individual citizens. Once the White House Homeland Security Council released the report on February 26, 2006, the Preparedness Directorate within DHS assumed responsibility for coordinating implementation of recommendations from all of the Hurricane Katrina lessons learned reports.

In addition to the White House Report, Ms. Gabbrielli’s team is currently analyzing reports from the Senate, House, General Accounting Office, and others. She requested that the meeting participants share any state or other reports with her team so that they can be incorporated into the overall action analysis and implementation plan.

Ms. Gabbrielli reviewed the Report structure, which is as follows.

- *Overview of Katrina Observations.* Chapters one through four provide a detailed overview of the state of national preparedness prior to Katrina, preparations for the hurricane, and the federal, state, and local response efforts.

- *Lessons Learned.* Chapters five and six catalog the various lessons learned from the Katrina experience and forecast how the nation should become better prepared for the next major Incident of National Significance.
- *Recommendations.* The Report lists 125 recommendations, organized into seventeen “Critical Challenges.” In addition, there are eleven specific actions which the Report states should be completed by June 1, 2006.

Ms. Gabbrielli reported that her team was nearly finished with the task of putting the Report recommendations into a matrix which integrates and cross-walks recommendations from all sources into a comprehensive list for implementation planning. Beginning with this meeting, DHS will solicit ongoing input from local, state, territorial/tribal interests, and the private sector to ensure that the resulting plan and implementation eliminate or mitigate the identified weaknesses, truly improving overall disaster response. Throughout the process, the team will constantly reevaluate and review their progress to ensure that it is inclusive, efficient, and effective.

### **Morning Plenary – Group Discussion and Initial Reactions**

Dr. Michael Lesnick from Meridian Institute solicited initial reactions and feedback from the plenary group. He asked participants to pay special attention to recommendations or key actions required in the short term (i.e., in the next three months). Initial comments were positive about the convening, tone, and tenor of the Summit. Several of those attending requested that the meeting materials, particularly the categorized recommendations and presentation about the Report, be provided to participants in electronic form so they could be distributed further among their colleagues. Participants also noted at the outset that although FEMA has been publicly disparaged during and after Hurricane Katrina, they believed that federal, “on- the-ground” employees performed admirably in a situation for which no one could have planned fully.

In addition to these general comments, plenary discussion also identified the following initial reactions by Summit participants:

#### **Clarity on Short-Term Asset Availability**

“The most important thing to know is what assets are available right now, for use this year – we do not mind having overwhelming capability.”

#### **Federal Implementation Responsibility**

“Who is in charge of making sure the Report recommendations are acted on in a reasonable timeframe at the federal level and how will state and local input be solicited and utilized throughout the process?”

DHS and White House officials responded with these clarifications:

- The Homeland Security Council Deputy’s Committee will hold weekly meetings to ensure that there is consistent follow through on the recommendations. The first order is sequencing and understanding budgetary implications

- DHS has responsibility for sixty-eight percent of the recommendations but all the other cabinet agencies also have responsibility and resources to offer. All federal government agencies should be tapped to provide their full range of expertise and resources (for example, utilizing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing, and so on).

### **Funding**

- Tying funding to implementation can be negative if done too quickly.
- If funding is eventually tied to implementation, there should be a screen for preparedness.

### **Do Not Rush or Be Reactive, Be Methodical** “If you want something bad, you will get it bad.”

- Governments generally get excited and then rush to do something/anything quickly; much of what has been done at the federal, state and local levels has been rushed.
- The state representatives can start the discussion today, but they need time with staff to do the real work well.
- Some of the recommendations will take three years or more to implement so we need an effective strategy to ensure we “stay the course” over time. We need to make sure that we put a degree of moderation in place to make sure we get to the endpoint well.
- Some improvements will involve resolving long-standing constitutional questions, including defining the roles of various state and federal military departments and identifying the response roles and functions when local government is incapacitated or overwhelmed by the disaster.
- Even though some of this will take a long time to implement fully, citizens expect a better response in the event of a disaster tomorrow.

### **Authority (Do Not Intrude on Governors’ Authority)**

- The recommendations focus on improving federal response. There is no recommendation to increase the role of the federal government, just to improve federal response when the states request it.
- When federal troops are needed, they should be under the command of the state Governor.
- The National Guard’s primary mission is to respond to Governors in the United States. The state Adjutant General should, at all times, remain the coordinator of his or her state’s National Guard resources.

### **Applicability and Use of State Resources**

- Some states have frequent disasters but are unlikely to ever have a catastrophic event. It does not make sense to use valuable resources to plan for events that are extremely unlikely to happen (for example, as was stated at the meeting, it is highly unlikely that cities such as Seattle or Columbus will ever need to evacuate for anything short of a nuclear bomb).

**Integrating Local/State/Tribal/Federal Planning and Implementation**

- State and local participants were excited about the concept of having a Principal Federal Official (PFO) in place prior to a storm so they can train and get to know each other rather than “exchanging business cards in an emergency.”
- The difficulty is achieving a balanced combination of state and federal efforts. If we can break down the “us/them” mentality, cooperative relationships can be built. This Report poses a good opportunity as long as this Summit is a start and not an end.
- The federal government must organize itself and get its parts talking to each other so they can then integrate well with ongoing state and local efforts.
- We appreciate the U.S. Department of Transportation’s review of our evacuation plans but we think everything should come through DHS with the National Response Plan (NRP).
- Local resources could be used to do backfill from areas not affected by the disaster.

**Training - “If you do not know what to do, you do what you know.”**

- There is an enormous training gap around the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC); it works well but people do not understand it. During Katrina, some cities were able to respond and then got involved in EMAC and, due to challenges understanding or working with that system, eventually did nothing.
- We are glad to see incident command structure training. If that is what we are going to continue to do then we need to put all elected officials through training.

**Role of the Military**

- In the past, the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) used to have the additional duty of training support brigades but now it appears that the dual function has been eliminated.
- There is an expectation that if there is a significant disaster this year, there will be a greater military involvement already (not just in a few years).
- We do not need more military response; we need better coordination and integration of all federal responders, including the military.

**Other Suggestions and Concerns**

- The DHS team putting together the recommendation matrix should look at the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center AARs for additional lessons learned. They did a lot of things right that would be applicable.
- Consider rolling in law enforcement rapid response teams as a possibility.
- We know people need resources quickly but we need to figure out a way to manage allocation of resources in a way that does not enable fraud or even the perception of fraud.
- The White House Report includes references to tribes more than many reports of its kind. However, even more consistent reference to the tribes in print is an important part of remembering that they are also key players in disaster preparedness and response.

**Breakout Group Discussions: Step One - Identifying Key Issues**

The meeting broke into three facilitated small group discussions, each with a mix of intergovernmental, law enforcement, first responder association and state, and federal representatives. Each group pursued their work in two steps; first, they identified key issues of major concern in the White House Report (long term or short term). Second, each small group then systematically reviewed the fifteen Critical Actions highlighted in the White House Report as being potentially important for short term attention and action. The reader will see some of the key points raised in step one appear in the summary of some of the detailed discussion for each of the fifteen Critical Actions

The key issues identified by one or more of the breakout groups in step one include the following.

*Unified Command is Critical*

Participants frequently used the terms “Unity of Command” and “Unity of Effort and Purpose.” They illustrated the importance of the principles underlying these terms, by describing Lieutenant General Russell Honoré’s recognition of his supporting role to Adjutant General Landreneau and Governor Blanco of Louisiana in response to Hurricane Katrina. These leaders worked closely together to coordinate the emergency response operations, executing against a common set of objectives with coordinated actions. Participants urged DHS to remember that local authorities do not follow the same chain of command that the federal government uses. For instance, governors do not work for the President, and the mayors do not work for the governors. The response system must work with intergovernmental coordination, not a strict federal chain of command. Note, the White House report and the NIMS distinguish between “unity of command” and “unified command” but the meeting participants did not always make the same distinction.<sup>1</sup>

*Emergency Response Should Not be Federalized*

Several participants emphasized that the current system of staged emergency response—local, state, then federal involvement, depending on the scale of an event—is generally effective and appropriate because tribal, local and state emergency response staff understand local conditions, needs, and priorities in an emergency. According to some, the Report has created a perception among state governments that the federal government desired to take on greater responsibility for emergency response. For example, the language regarding a fully trained and manned National Guard gives the impression that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) would command National Guard troops in emergency response operations. State governors feel strongly that they

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<sup>1</sup> “Unity of command: The concept by which each person within an organization reports to one and only one designated person. The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective.

Unified command: An application of the Incident Command System used when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when incidents cross political jurisdictions. Agencies work together through the designated members of the Unified Command, often the senior person from agencies and/or disciplines participating in the Unified Command, to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single incident action plan.” (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. P.13)

should retain command over National Guard troops during emergency response operations. DHS participants clarified that while the Report examines ways to improve the federal response to emergencies, there is no recommendation for increasing the federalization of emergency management and response. Primary responsibility is intended to remain with state and local governments. Participants suggested that a conference call chaired by the National Governors Association would be a useful forum in which to clarify the White House position and address governors' concerns.

*The NRP Should Undergo Only Limited Revisions; Training Should be Improved to Increase Awareness and Utility of the Plan.*

Although it is clear that some minor changes and modifications must be made to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to the NRP, participants stressed that the federal government should refrain from large scale revision and revamping. Federal, state, local, and tribal officials have not had time yet to fully understand and implement the structures in the NRP, but that does not mean those structures are not, for the most part, well designed and appropriate.

To fully recognize its value, the NRP needs a period of stability to ensure that stakeholders and responders develop both working knowledge of the plan and functional implementation confidence. In the near term, to best guide state, local, tribal officials until the general level of familiarity increases, it is particularly important for personnel from federal departments and agencies to develop in-depth understanding of the NRP and protocols for intergovernmental coordination.

Many of the recommendations in the White House Report would result in changes to the NRP. Substantive revision of the NRP would mean that some state agencies would have to become more operationally engaged than they have been thus far. In light of the burden and confusion likely to ensue from further modifications, participants strongly counseled that further revision of the Plan be undertaken only with significant input from state, local, tribal representatives and then, only if absolutely necessary.

Participants also noted that many states have sent guidance to local first responders and are now preparing to train people on implementation of NIMS and NRP. By beginning anew or making substantial revisions to the NRP in reaction to issues raised during the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Federal government would place an even greater training burden on state, local, and tribal governments. If the intergovernmental work team determines that such revisions are necessary, it would be very helpful for DHS to assemble and annotate a catalog of federal training opportunities which address these specific changes and challenges.

The federal government needs to reach out to state, local, and tribal officials and responders as partners in NRP implementation. "Talking down" to locals (as was observed when the NRP was rolled out) disenfranchises vitally needed state, local, and tribal experts and undercuts the fundamental partnerships needed to effectively implement the NRP (as one participant noted, "Partnering is not parenting misspelled!"). In addition, many emergency responders wear multiple hats and are unlikely to have the time to read thick and detailed response plans. "Job aids" and check lists that synthesize information for specific jobs would help ensure that the

NRP roles, functions, and implementation are understood and operational at the state, local, and tribal level. These aids would help in ultimately carrying out the functions of the NRP in the event of an emergency, particularly an overwhelmingly catastrophic one.

To help put functional plans in place, several participants mentioned the importance of training and training exercises. They noted that for many years, state and local first responders have participated in incident command training which typically is evaluated by federal personnel but does not usually include them as integrated participants. Joint training opportunities have become more limited since training was taken from FEMA and centralized in DHS.

They recommended that federal, tribal, state, and local officials conduct “table-top” exercises to clarify Emergency Support Function (ESF) roles and to establish and test communication and coordination among states, Joint Field Offices (JFO) and the PFOs.

*Roles, Responsibility, and Authority must be Clarified at All Levels and a Regional Focus Should be Re-Established*

Participants strongly urged the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities now, before the next emergency. Participants noted duplicative and uncoordinated requests during the response to Hurricane Katrina that resulted in political and jurisdictional conflict, in many cases far from the affected area. In light of this, participants identified clarifying deployment roles between federal, state, tribal, and local officials; between government and volunteers; and among federal government agencies (e.g., DHS and Health and Human Services -HHS) as a key near-term issue for resolution.

The role most identified as needing clarification was that of the PFO, the principal federal official. Summit participants see early identification of the PFO for each state or region as paramount in importance. Early designation, along with advanced placement in the region and conferral of authority to commit federal resources would enable hurricane-region states to develop working relationships in advance of disasters themselves as well as begin planning and advance preparations for this year’s season, thus potentially mitigating some of the issues seen in the Katrina response

Participants also noted that the lack of clarity around roles of the PFO, the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), and state authorities causes confusion that undermines the federal government’s role of coordination and integration. Confusion about the roles of the PFO versus the FCO is an issue that participants agreed must be resolved in the near term (prior to June 1). One participant noted that in most instances, an FCO is sufficient and the only justification for a PFO is a complex situation where massive federal resources need to be coordinated. Some felt that application of Homeland Security Regions with an assigned FCO would resolve the issue; others were skeptical. Most saw no reason to tamper with the FCO as it was used in the pre-NRP days under FEMA.

Participants were also acutely aware of the considerable inter-jurisdictional aspects of the emergency response system. Some of these considerations have to do with tribal lands. It is important that all institutions involved carefully evaluate the capacity of tribes to respond to

emergencies, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of various state and federal agencies related to working with the tribes.

Finally, DHS should invest in re-establishing a relationship between the FEMA regions and the states. Participants stressed that too much of FEMA's work is run out of Washington. Regional staffs understand the diversity of state agency structures and responsibility within the region. Also, strong relationships between states and the regional offices are vital to effective preparedness and response.

*The Process for Disaster Assistance Coordination and Reimbursements Should be Solidified*

Creating a one-stop Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) would require a close look at the types of services that are reimbursable. State-federal coordination was effective with regard to prescription drugs, transfer of Medicaid, and immunization registries. To reinforce this critical aspect of disaster response, a more effective process should be put in place at that level so that the same or better response can occur every time it is needed. After Katrina, states experienced constantly shifting federal policy. States incurred significant costs on one week that were not considered reimbursable the next. Regional staff were not informed or empowered to provide information on how to offer or deploy assistance.

*Improve and Harmonize the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)*

An effective EMAC is preferable to self-deployment. However, time delays and fragmented service can result in secondary disasters, as was experienced during the response to Hurricane Katrina. Coordination cannot occur in the heat of the moment, it must be planned well in advance. Hundreds of communities offered resources through EMAC, but lack of advanced planning and poor understanding of implementation issues resulted in a huge bottleneck. As a result, many of those resources were not deployed in a timely or effective way. Participants felt strongly that DHS should provide guidance to the states on harmonizing their resource definitions with FEMA's as one way to make EMAC more effective.

*Focus on Planning that is Relevant to Each State or Region*

While everyone recognized that difficulties arising from the overwhelming events associated with Katrina, group members felt DHS should not force hurricane-dictated requirements (e.g., evacuation plans) on states that are highly unlikely to ever need such plans. Further, there is a focus on evacuation planning, but not enough on state, local, and tribal jurisdictions' ability to receive evacuees. The process by which Katrina evacuees were sent to other states was frustrating and developed "on the fly," with little intergovernmental or interagency communication and planning (e.g., states and local governments were stood up then stood down multiple times, sometimes with evacuees never arriving at all). In addition, during Hurricane Katrina there was no central system for reporting location and movement of evacuees. Such a system could get triage resources where they are most needed. Local agencies and volunteers (the heart of evacuees' placement and care processes) may refuse to participate in the future if these deficiencies are not corrected.

Weaknesses in the evacuee placement and reception process also underscored the need for states to have coordinated reception and care plans which are exercised well in advance of catastrophic

events. While crucial to disaster recovery, this important element is not adequately included in planning, training, and exercising. Participants recognized that the Report recommendations dealing with “mass care” were important first steps on the issue but were fervent that these recommendations should be strengthened and elevated in their importance.

*Utilize Funding Incentives Instead of or in Addition to Threats*

DHS funding to states is largely obligated by the time a state receive the monies. It is therefore difficult to quickly adjust to changing mandates from the federal government. Participants stressed that DHS should not leverage additional planning requirements on state, local, and tribal entities without providing additional resources. Also, funding for many states is becoming risk-based. Thus, states will likely have less access to funding from DHS to adapt to changes that flow from these recommendations. Participants strongly suggested that DHS consider offering incentives for compliance with the NRP and other federal requirements versus penalties for non-compliance. Threats to withholding funding from states which do not produce adequate evacuation plans are not viewed by the states as either productive or credible.

<b>Breakout Group Discussions: Step Two – Systematic Review of the Fifteen Specific Actions (Prior to June 1, 2006)</b>
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In preparation for the breakout group sessions, Ms. Gabbrielli’s team compiled a list of relevant recommendations under each of the fifteen Specific Actions identified in the Report for near-term implementation. After identifying the most pressing themes and cross-cutting issues in step one, each breakout group discussed a subset of those time-sensitive Specific Actions and associated recommendations. Facilitators suggested the following questions to help guide the discussions. They noted, however, that discussions were not to be constrained by these questions.

1. *Relative Priority:* What is the relative importance of this particular Specific Action item in comparison to the other Specific Actions and why?
2. *Barriers to Implementation:* What barriers might inhibit effective implementation of the recommendations listed under this critical challenge (at either the federal, state, tribal, or local level)? How do you suggest these barriers be addressed?
3. *How to Maximize Cooperation:* What can DHS and others do now to try to ensure maximum federal, state, local, and tribal cooperation to implement the recommendations and actions to the best of everyone’s ability in the June 1 time horizon?
4. *Critical Implications:* Are there critical implications associated with implementation of these recommendations at the state, local, and tribal levels that must be recognized, anticipated, and planned for (i.e., second or third order effects that might be obvious to state, local, or tribal jurisdictions but might be missed by someone from the federal level)?

At the end of the breakout group sessions, each group identified the priority recommendations from their discussions and prepared a brief report to present during the afternoon plenary session with Secretary Chertoff, Acting Under Secretary Paulison, and Mr. Rapuano. While in most cases only one or two of the breakout groups covered each Specific Action and related recommendations, the issues and comments highlighted below are compiled from the discussions of all three of the breakout groups.

**Specific Action 1: Ensure that, in the event of another disaster, we are able to co-locate relevant Federal, State, tribal, and local decision-makers, including leaders of State National Guards, to enhance unity of effort.**

Two of the three breakout groups discussed Specific Action 1. Participants mentioned that one of the main problems with initial emergency response in the greater New Orleans area was the diffusion of leadership. There were four JFOs, many different command centers in the area with sporadic, inconsistent communication among them.

Good emergency response requires proactive, inclusive leadership. Decision-makers from federal, state and local authorities should be provided with sufficient information for situational awareness, and there should be unified logistical support of emergency response staff.

Good communication is critical. Local, tribal, and state emergency response managers must be able to communicate with federal decision-makers in order to identify and coordinate needed federal resources and their placement. If there is any breakdown in communication, the resources do not flow.

Further, during the Katrina aftermath, some federal resources did not reach the affected population quickly enough. Local emergency responders started bringing in assistance from other localities but those emergency responders did not have logistical support, which became a disaster in itself.

#### *Identifying PFOs in Advance*

Participants strongly agreed that the first step in improving communication and unification of command was to identify PFOs before the hurricane season starts. PFOs should be located in the regions immediately and begin building relationships with state, local, and tribal emergency managers in advance of the next hurricane season. The roles and responsibilities of the PFOs should be clearly defined, and the PFO should have the authority to make decisions about all federal assets in the region. Participants stated that the PFO should be a liaison between state policy makers, other federal agencies, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the White House.

#### *Joint Training and Practice*

The designated PFOs should also participate in training and table-top exercises with state, local, and tribal decision-makers between now and June 1. The training programs and exercises should identify gaps so that resources can be appropriately targeted.

#### *Clarifying PFO and FCO roles*

Breakout group participants discussed the roles played by PFOs and FCOs according to the NRP. Meeting participants described the role of the FCO as primarily focused on identifying resource requirements and sourcing those requirements with appropriate federal agencies. They described the role of the PFO as resolving issues among federal agencies and providing situational awareness to the DHS Secretary.

The complexities of execution in the midst of a response action introduce serious ambiguities and overlap in the roles. Participants agreed that the PFO and FCO functions should be combined in one person, or that FCO functions could be subordinated to the PFO, in order to create effective and unambiguous command decision-structures for state and local decision-makers. However, participants emphasized that FCOs play an important role in implementing the Stafford Act. For instance, state, local, and tribal decision-makers work with FCOs on recovery issues following an emergency. FCOs often are able to generate quick federal responses to state requests for assistance. For this reason, the combination of PFO and FCO functions should build on the already effective role of FCO and not lead to slower federal response to states' requests for assistance with emergency response and recovery activities. In addition, participants suggested that PFOs should be trained to implement the Stafford Act.

A participant suggested that DHS should capture lessons learned from the upcoming hurricane season to inform the review and modification of the NRP. Another participant pointed out that the role of the FCO is well defined in federal and state law, but that the PFO role is newer and that some states may need to update their statutes to create equivalent positions or to effectively accommodate and coordinate the PFO role.

#### *JFO and EOC Co-Location*

Participants clarified that Specific Action 1 was intended to refer to co-location of JFOs and PFOs, with state, local, and tribal decision-makers, not just co-location of the federal decision-makers. The NRP model is to co-locate field offices with state Emergency Operating Centers (EOCs). Participants from DHS also identified a need for more robust, remote operational bases that communicate closely with the JFO. Participants emphasized that this forward field presence should not interfere with the ability of state authorities to identify needs and coordinate emergency response activities. The State of Louisiana is also considering the development of forward field presence, and there seems to be an opportunity for the federal and state agencies to coordinate the development of advanced field operations. Participants noted that it can be challenging for some remote states and territories to bring in appropriate federal officers to support ESF functions.

#### *Clarification of Recommendations 4 and 49e*

Recommendation 4<sup>2</sup> is related to establishing Homeland Security Regions, which are intended to be the same as FEMA regions. Over time, all FEMA regional offices will be enhanced to become fully operational regional headquarters with many more functions than the current offices. This transformation will take time, however, and intermediate steps should be taken to bolster regional staff.

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<sup>2</sup> Recommendation 4: DHS should develop and implement Homeland Security Regions that are fully staffed, trained, and equipped to manage and coordinate all preparedness activities and any emergency that may require a substantial Federal response. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 89)

Recommendation 49e<sup>3</sup>, related to logistics coordination through the JFO, should be understood as applying to all emergencies and should include law enforcement into the JFO structure. The recommendation would be improved if it said more about the roles and authorization for undertaking the actions described. Recent experience shows the need for a single federal official in the JFO with responsibility for all federal law enforcement. Implementation of ESF-13 should be monitored closely to ensure that such a situation does not repeat itself.

**Specific Action 2: For events preceded by warning, ensure we are prepared to pre-position a fully resourced and integrated interagency Federal Joint Field Office (JFO) to coordinate and, if necessary, direct Federal support to the disaster.**

Two breakout groups discussed Specific Action 2. Participants pointed out that recommendation 38<sup>4</sup>, related to partnering to provide a logistics system in emergencies, is especially important to the success of this action. Participants noted the importance of ensuring that federal, state, tribal, and local officials are not going to the same private sector resources with overlapping or redundant contracts and requests. In a truly catastrophic event (which does not have to be a hurricane), help from the federal government will be needed. The federal government should be prepared to push assistance, but it should work with states to determine the timing of executing its response assistance (in comparison to a request from a state when resources are “pulled” from the federal government). Furthermore, states need to know in advance what resources will be available from the federal government. A common language based on FEMA’s resource-typing activities would enable all parties to request and respond more efficiently.

Participants also discussed the need to clarify the type of costs that are reimbursable under different scenarios. In particular, participants identified situations in which local and state governments decide to evacuate people with special needs (e.g., critical care patients, non-ambulatory patients) in advance of the event in order to ensure that “high risk” groups are out of harm’s way or to take other preventive actions which mitigate potentially disastrous outcomes. Preventive measures often begin up to a week before event’s actual occurrence (such as the predicted landfall of a hurricane). However, the event often does not occur as predicted (the hurricane changes course or loses strength). Current rules do not allow federal reimbursement for “preventive” actions for “unrealized” benefits. Evacuations (especially those for special needs) and other preventive actions are expensive, and local governments do not have the resources for

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<sup>3</sup> *Recommendation 49*: DHS should, in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ), revise the NRP to provide more effective coordination of the law enforcement response to a disaster by clarifying and expanding the role and mission of the Public Safety and Security support function and the Senior Federal Law Enforcement Officer. The revised NRP should:

e. Require the establishment of a law enforcement coordination center within the Joint Field Office (JFO) to coordinate the Federal, State, and local law enforcement response during all types of emergencies. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 103)

<sup>4</sup> *Recommendation 38*: DHS should partner with State, local, and tribal governments, other Federal agencies, and the private sector to develop an efficient, transparent, and flexible logistics system for the procurement and delivery of goods and services during emergencies. DHS should develop a logistics system, utilizing an integrated supply chain management approach, capable of supporting large-scale disaster operations by leveraging resources within both the public sector and the private sector. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 98)

one or multiple evacuations each season. Therefore, this issue must be fixed in the funding regulations.

### *Presidential Emergency Declarations*

Several participants suggested that Presidential Emergency Declarations offer a vehicle for covering these types of expenses. For this solution to work, the declarations must be requested and enacted within a timely manner. Various participants validated that when executed correctly and the political “will” is present; emergency declarations can be worked through the system quickly. For instance, the emergency declaration for Hurricane Isabel was provided six hours after it was requested. Thus, the ultimate remedy must institutionalize the will to enact declarations quickly, especially keeping in mind that additional time challenges are present for groups such as tribes that are located in outlying areas and must go through state authorities to request an emergency declaration.

Specific Actions 6 and 9 are also relevant to this issue. One participant suggested that state and local authorities develop a Memorandum of Understanding with out-of-state healthcare facilities to ensure agreements are in place with a facility that can receive evacuees with special needs.

### *The Nature of the JFO*

Participants noted that JFOs are situation-driven and, thus, vary from situation to situation. Participants requested, however, that advance planning be done so everyone understands what capabilities JFOs will have in different scenarios.

Participants discussed whether it was appropriate to pre-identify JFO locations. Some participants indicated it may be difficult, and perhaps even a waste of time, to pre-identify JFO locations. They said suitable locations identified before a disaster may not be appropriate (e.g., more expensive or unavailable) due to changes in local circumstances during a disaster. For example, participants agreed that the federal government should focus on establishing and maintaining the capability to set up JFOs for large disasters within twenty-four hours. One participant suggested that the JFO could consist of a mobile package that could be expanded depending on the needs of the situation and that full use should be made of the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology available to achieve this.

Further, many states, such as Louisiana, have EOCs too full with state personnel to also provide a site for a fully-staffed JFO. Participants suggested that if the federal government could provide states with lists of JFO functions and activities in advance, the states can tell the federal government exactly where they can locate their JFO staff. Participants suggested that state and federal leadership should be based together at the EOC so that they are in constant contact. Depending on the situation, additional JFO functions may be needed, and the state can identify appropriate locations for each function. The federal government should develop systems to maintain communications and coordination between the various functions of the JFO. Federal participants noted that this may be difficult given the full complement of functions that usually co-locate with key decision-makers in the JFO.

One aspect of establishing a functioning JFO is the ability of states to maintain and sustain packages of critical equipment and supplies in the field that can be used when a JFO is established (e.g., communications and personal protection caches).

#### *Clarification of Recommendation 1a*

Participants felt that recommendation 1a<sup>5</sup>, suggesting revision of the NRP to address situations that render state and local governments incapable of effective response, is too open-ended as written. They pointed to the need for clarification of what circumstances render a state and local governments “incapable of an effective response.” White House and DHS participants responded that recommendation 1a was intended to refer to truly catastrophic events under the NRP. Participants suggested that the NRP clarify who determines what a catastrophic event is and what standards would be used.

#### **Specific Action 3: Ensure situational awareness by establishing rapid deployable communications as well as instituting a structure for consolidated Federal operational reporting to the Department of Homeland Security.**

Many participants felt that this specific action was the highest priority reviewed because of the criticality of effective communications to overall successful response operations and because of the breadth of its application (i.e., all communication media, computers, network infrastructure, bandwidth, email, data, etc.).

#### *Developing Systems to Provide Situational Awareness – Immediate Term*

Participants felt that the first step should be to organize teams that can provide situational awareness reports immediately after a catastrophic event. They stressed the importance of designing a system for collecting and collating situational information. Each team should know initially what type of information is needed from the field, so that consistent sets of information are gathered. It should also be clear at the start how the information generated would move through the chain of command and providing situational awareness and common operating picture to all federal, state, tribal, and local responders and decision-makers.

#### *Developing Rapidly Deployable Communications – Near Term*

The second step is to develop rapidly deployable, mobile communications units for situations in which communications systems have been completely wiped out by a hurricane or other disaster. Participants felt that it would be helpful if the federal government could supply such communications units. Participants suggested that jurisdictions with high threat levels should be first to receive these communications packages.

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<sup>5</sup> *Recommendation 1:* DHS should establish an interagency team of senior planners with appropriate emergency management experience to conduct a comprehensive, 90-day review of the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

a. Revise the NRP to address situations that render State and local governments incapable of an effective response. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned, p. 88)

Some participants indicated that it should be possible to complete these two tasks by June 1, but they stressed again the need to work in collaboration with state and local authorities during execution of the action item. Participants also mentioned that training staff to use the equipment was critical to successful outcome.

#### *Developing Federal Communications Standards – Longer Term*

Participants also discussed the challenges of inter-operable communications systems, a well-known and well-documented weakness in national systems. Participants felt that this was both a challenging and important issue and that it might be best addressed at the federal level. Participants also pointed out that states agree that there should be one standard but that they have not been able to agree on what standard to use because of the complex political, commercial, procurement, and other issues involved. Participants clearly recognized this as a difficulty requiring federal leadership, suggesting that the federal government propose a standard for all communications media within eighteen to twenty-four months.

Participants also pointed to the need to validate Universal Task Lists (UTL) and Target Capabilities Lists (TCL), so they can be tested, validated, and allowed to evolve. State and local governments should be able to suggest amendments to UTLs and TCLs for consideration and implementation.

#### **Specific Action 4: In order to enhance coordination of military resources supporting the response, co-locate a single Department of Defense point of contact at the JFO and current FEMA regional offices.**

Two breakout groups discussed specific Action 4. They felt that this action should be about coordination and communication between the DCO and the Joint Task Force (JTF) (i.e., not about command over National Guard troops versus command over active military). Some thought that if the DCO and JTF are not co-located, there may be communication and coordination problems. Short of co-location, some participants thought that, at a minimum, some liaison between the DCO and JTF is necessary. Participants suggested that DHS and DoD clarify the intended course of action while remembering that local knowledge is critical in order to help ensure effective support from the military.

One breakout group suggested that the existing description of DoD's role should be examined before a new system is created. DoD's knowledge and understanding of its role under existing plans and processes may be the real issue. If, in fact, DoD's responsibilities do need to expand, DoD may need to become a co-lead on more ESFs (it is only a co-lead on one at present).

#### *Clarifying Recommendation 22*

Recommendation 22<sup>6</sup>, pertaining to DoD taking the lead in disaster response, applies if an incident overwhelms state and local resources and the federal government has to step in.

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<sup>6</sup> Recommendation 22: DOD and DHS should develop recommendations for revision of the NRP to delineate the circumstances, objectives, and limitations of when DOD might temporarily assume the lead for the Federal response to a catastrophic incident. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 94)

Participants asked for clarification regarding the circumstances under which the lead of the federal response would switch from a civilian federal entity to a military entity. Participants felt that this might be a rare circumstance, such as a mega-catastrophe like Katrina. They pointed out that while there have been many hurricanes; Katrina was the only instance in which federal military assets had to be used. A participant suggested that DHS review the AARs from DoD's response to the G-8 Summit and the Democratic and Republican Conventions. Even though these were pre-planned events, there may be lessons to be learned for hurricane emergency planning and response.

**Specific Action 5. To ensure the most effective employment of Federal disaster relief personnel and assets, designate locations throughout the country for receiving, staging, moving, and integrating them.**

Many participants felt that this specific action was the highest priority of the ones they reviewed, noting that it gets to the heart of preparedness and ability to respond.

*Preparedness Exercises*

Participants urged DHS to be an active participant in state and regional preparedness exercises, stressing that DHS should be a player in those exercises, not just an evaluator of state, tribal, and local performance and readiness. By integrating the federal government into state and regional exercises, critical interfaces, communication, and hand-offs can be practiced in advance.

*Homeland Security Regions*

Participants expressed concern over what the Homeland Security Regions will be and whether this organizing structure would be disruptive to the current structure. Participants were supportive of using existing federal regions, understanding that FEMA regions are different from other DHS components' regions. They noted that the conflicting regions across DHS and the federal government are a barrier to a coordinated and effective federal response. Many participants stressed that federal officials should organize itself first into a regional structure, and then smaller players will organize in response. DHS should not be trying to change regional-level structures.

*Deployment of Goods and Services*

Participants had a number of observations from Katrina as to how DHS should support the development of an efficient, transparent and flexible logistics system for the procurement and delivery of goods and services during an emergency. Participants urged DHS to play a role in coordinating contracts so that states and FEMA do not contract with the same vendors for the same supplies. This resulted in overtaxed vendors unable to provide the needed supplies with no back-up or surge capacity. DHS also needs policies that prevent federal responders from taking equipment from local communities, unless agreed to by local officials. Reports of FEMA officials commandeering generators, communications equipment, and other caches of supplies gathered by local communities in executing their own emergency response plans were cited as prime examples of failure to have effective and coordinated logistics provisions, leaving them unable to function effectively, despite their good pre-disaster planning.

Participants also shared concern that in some states there is a duplication of efforts between the states and the federal government. This is resulting in some states over-preparing in terms of the supplies they are stock piling and pre-contracting. Other participants held the opposite view and expressed concern that some states are under-preparing and are thus over relying on federal support.

### *Use of the Private Sector*

A number of participants encouraged DHS to tap into private sector supply chains for delivery of goods and services. For example, Home Depot and Wal-Mart are leaders in supply chain management and can move products with great speed and efficiency. Participants cautioned that there are limits when relying on the private sector's limited, just-in-time inventory practices. However, the private sector has great logistics capabilities that should be leveraged. The federal government may need to compensate industry to hold excess inventory as a preparedness measure.

### *Education*

Participants also noted that there is a personal responsibility to be prepared; educating the public and encouraging responsibility at the individual and family level is an important aspect of effective disaster response that can take pressure off local, state, and federal resources in the event of a disaster. It was also noted that associations representing local and state partners can be effective channels to better educate their members on EMAC roles, responsibilities and coordination so that these parties are prepared to respond in the most constructive and efficient manner possible.

## **Specific Action 6. Identify and develop rosters of Federal, State, tribal, and local government personnel who are prepared to assist in disaster relief.**

This issue was addressed by two of the breakout groups. Participants agreed that there is a need for response teams and individuals that can be trained, credentialed, and ready to assist. There is also a need for a system that can indicate whether teams and individuals possess the response requirements that are needed. While important, many participants did not feel that this was a high priority issue for completion by June 1 and noted that it would take a longer time horizon to address.

### *Inclusion on Rosters*

There was some confusion because the title of Specific Action 6 refers to federal, state, tribal and local government personnel while the related recommendations address federal inter-agency task forces and a "National inventory of federal capabilities." Participants felt more clarification was needed regarding what expertise would be held in the federal roster.

### *Ensuring Appropriate Assignments*

Requirement types need to be consistent at all levels to ensure that the requester and responder are speaking the same language. There may need to be national standards for setting requirements. In addition to ensuring that people are doing jobs they are qualified to do, there is

also a need to coordinate assignments so that people are not overqualified for what they are assigned to do (e.g., firefighters handing out FEMA flyers instead of fighting fires).

### *Roster Duplication*

Participants noted that a number of rosters currently exist. Where possible, DHS should tap in and tie on to existing registration systems in order to eliminate and reduce the confusion over competing rosters.

State and local representatives suggested that, in general, there needs to be greater clarity as to who is being registered and by whom, with coordination and transparency across all three levels of government.

### *Integration with EMAC*

Specific Action 6 also involves better integration with EMAC. State and local participants felt strongly that registration and training should focus on the local level with DHS supplementing what is needed to fill in gaps identified from the Katrina response. While the goal as written is satisfactory, it does not include genuine volunteers (EMAC only covers those who are employed, not true volunteers) and that omission must be addressed in order to truly improve response actions for large-scale disasters.

### *Roster Access*

Several state representatives expressed some concerns about the use of rosters. They wanted assurance that the Federal government would not be contacting members on local rosters, thus “robbing” locals of needed response capabilities. States further objected to interpretation of the Privacy Act provisions which hampered personnel/volunteer information shared among governments during Katrina. There was also an issue of state access to federal rosters. During Katrina, states wanted to see who was volunteering from their state but could not get access to the data for security reasons. Participants felt that security concerns and privacy act stipulations could be addressed while still allowing states some access to this information.

### *Recommendation 9*

The substantive content of recommendation 9<sup>7</sup>, related to developing interagency task forces for managing the national response, was accepted but state participants expressed concern about the use and intent of “managing” as opposed to “coordinating.” White House staff indicated that the language was trying to address locally overwhelming event that would require federal management. The recommendation is carefully worded to say “capable of managing,” not “will manage.”

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<sup>7</sup> Recommendation 9: DHS should establish several strategic-level, standby, rapidly deployable interagency task forces capable of managing the national response for catastrophic incidents that span more than one Homeland Security Region (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned, p. 90)

**Specific Action 7: Employ all available 21st Century technologies both to update and utilize the national Emergency Alert System in order to provide the general public with advanced notification of and instruction for disasters and emergencies.**

Breakout group 2 discussed Specific Action 7 which participants felt was a high priority for a successful implementation plan. Emergency alerts and threat information are the critical starting points to all successful response operations. Participants felt that DHS should solicit local input about the system.

*System of Systems*

Participants noted that there are many avenues of information, particularly for educated and technology savvy populations; no one system can reach everyone. Therefore, multi-modal, “system of systems” for notifications and alerts are imperative.

*Communication*

However, participants also suggested that consistency of communication across the various systems was equally important when multi-modes and technologies are simultaneously used. Finally, when simple tools will get the job done, simple communication methods should not be overlooked.

*Education*

Participants suggested that people need to be educated about what to do with the information they receive. Participants suggested that DHS implementation in this area could be helped by an existing Mitre report on 21<sup>st</sup> Century communication (participants believed that Craig Fugate from Florida participated on the report).

**Specific Action 8: – Encourage states to pre-contract with service providers for key disaster relief efforts, such as debris removal and the provision of critical commodities.**

Breakout group 2 discussed Specific Action 8 in detail, while breakout group 3 addressed certain specific elements. Participants felt that this was also a high priority action, in particular for Gulf and Atlantic states given the June 1 timeline. The Report’s actions under Specific Action 8 were seen as especially important in restoring public confidence because of the need to see tangible action immediately after an emergency.

*Conflicting Contracts*

Breakout groups discussing this issue again recognized the importance of coordinated planning and logistical analysis in the preparation and planning for disaster response. Conflicting, redundant, and overlapping contracts have been a problem in cases where FEMA may have pre-contracted with the same vendors as state agencies.

*Differing State Contracting Processes*

Further, participants felt that solutions to this challenge demanded sensitive and judicious use of “require” versus “manage” for state contracts. DHS should recognize that some states already have pre-established contracts; other states, however, have pre-identified vendors, but are not allowed by state law to pre-contract and these states should not be penalized for not pre-contracting. Participants also felt that there is a need to differentiate between catastrophic and non-catastrophic disasters. Pre-contracting is less essential for smaller occurrences.

*Encouraging vs. Requiring Contracts*

Specific Action 8 states that contracts with the private sector should be encouraged but recommendation 38b<sup>8</sup> says they should be required. Requiring contracts is likely to offend states’ sensitivities while glossing over the difference listed above that result in some states not having pre-contracted vendors for good reason. “Encourage” or “assist” would be more appropriate and acceptable. Given the June 1 timing, this should be done first for potentially hurricane affected states.

*Incentives*

Participants strongly suggested that incentives were always better than penalties for encouraging state compliance with desired outcomes. They suggested that DHS provide states with incentives to prepare. At one time, there was a program for mitigation plans where states with enhanced status would get a slightly larger reimbursement for rebuilding but this incentive was revoked. DHS should put positive incentives into grants and not have it contingent upon a disaster for payback.

*Federal Support*

As with discussions under other specific actions, participants again saw the pre-designation of a fully empowered PFO to integrate federal plans with state and regional plans by June 1 as an essential element of this solution. Participants urged DHS to put someone on the ground now in each state and to let the states know what resources can be counted upon. Participants suggested that since the federal FY06 budget had been signed since October, 2006 funds should be released now in order to greatly enhance the state preparedness.

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<sup>8</sup> *Recommendation 38:* DHS should partner with State and local governments, other Federal agencies, and the private sector to develop an efficient, transparent, and flexible logistics system for the procurement and delivery of goods and services during emergencies. DHS should develop a logistics system, utilizing an integrated supply chain management approach, capable of supporting large-scale disaster operations by leveraging resources within both the public sector and the private sector.

b) DHS should require that local and State governments establish contracts with private-sector vendors for disaster-relief supplies in advance of an emergency with the assurance of reimbursement should these contracts be activated in a post-disaster declaration environment. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 99)

DHS should also relate funding formulas to “all threat/all hazards,” as opposed to formulas based on terrorism or other low probability threat occurrence. Further, DHS should not impose requirements on the entire nation that are designed to deal specifically with regional threats. This issue was seen as one of the most critical items that could be resolved before June 1, thus having direct impact on both substantive execution and public confidence.

#### *Clarifying Recommendation 88*

With regard to recommendation 88<sup>9</sup> (pertaining to coordinating debris removal as part of ESF operational procedures), some participants felt that FEMA guidelines have become more and more restrictive regarding removal of debris from private property. Community rehabilitation cannot begin until debris is removed. Authorities cannot assume that private property owners will remove debris and that if they do so, it will be done in a way that contributes to community rehabilitation. Authorities need to work with insurance companies and other entities involved to make the debris removal process smoother.

#### **Specific Action 9: Enhance the mechanism for providing Federal funds to States for preparations upon warning of an imminent emergency.**

All three breakout groups discussed Specific Action 9, with common opinions articulated across all three groups. Participants felt that enhancing the mechanism for providing federal funds is an important issue at the state, tribal, and local levels, derivatively affecting outcome of all other recommendations. Participants suggested that between now and June 1 something be done to enhance the appropriate mechanism(s).

#### *Remove Pre-Event Barriers to State Reimbursement*

Participants suggested that DHS and FEMA should remove pre-event barriers to state reimbursement that inhibit prevention and preparedness. States need to be able to pre-deploy resources based on risk, not occurrence, and DHS should not penalize states for pre-deploying, preparing, and doing the correct thing early.

Participants discussed the example of evacuating vulnerable populations (see discussion under Specific Action 2) several days before the predicted landfall of a hurricane. In such a situation, states are doing the right thing but cannot be sure whether and how the hurricane will affect the evacuated areas. Participants asked for means for state, tribal, and local institutions to be reimbursed for the costs of such anticipatory evacuations and other pre-emergency measures. An additional complication is that some state laws will not allow pre-deployments that are not a part of the planned budget.

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<sup>9</sup> Recommendation 88: DHS should jointly lead DOD/USACE, DOI, USDA, and EPA to address and coordinate debris removal issues as part of ESF operational procedures. The procedures should include an integrated public communication approach for debris removal, especially as it applies to private property. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 112)

*Presidential Emergency Declarations*

Participants clarified that once a Presidential Emergency Declaration has been made, the cost share provisions of the Stafford Act (Category A and B) are automatically activated. Several participants asked that DHS clarify what types of expenses are reimbursable under the Act, what services come with an emergency declaration, what the gaps are, and how to access Stafford Act funds. If DHS could make sure that the people asking for assistance know what they can expect to receive, these people can be more efficient and effective at marshalling other needed resources from their own area. They also asked for clarification on the conditions that would trigger a state's request for an Emergency Declaration (e.g., how long before a hurricane's predicted landfall). Participants asked for clarification of the President's power to declare an emergency (i.e., the authority to invoke the Stafford Act without a state request).

*Reimbursement for Non-Stafford Act Events*

Participants questioned whether reimbursements could be provided to states for non-Stafford Act events (e.g., preparations for terrorist threats). At present, there are no apparent mechanisms in place for non-Stafford Act events. One approach could be to preposition assets and contracts. Another approach to enhance the mechanism might be through other existing mechanisms or funds. Participants asked that DHS clarify what funds can be used and how states can access the funds.

*Tribal Requests for Emergency Funding*

Participants also discussed the need for tribal and state governments to work together and that clarification on what mechanism tribes should use to request Emergency Declarations was needed. In many cases, tribes would go through the states to request an Emergency Declaration, but there may be situations where tribes would want to deal with the federal government directly (e.g., the Navajo nation spans four states and may want to deal with the federal government directly). Executive Order 13175 requires that federal agencies work with tribal governments to meet tribal needs. For some tribes, this may be the preferred mechanism to deal with the federal Emergency Declaration and funding.

*Mechanisms to Involve Non-Affected States*

Cost eligibility questions are significant from state, tribal, and local perspectives. Some state and regional authorities are reluctant to open shelters upon warning of an imminent emergency because they are not guaranteed that they will be reimbursed, especially if they are a host state but not an impact state.

Participants suggested that DHS develop mechanisms that enable non-affected states to provide assistance (e.g., receive evacuees) and be reimbursed. Further, DHS should develop plans articulating mechanisms for future participation of non-affected states.

**Specific Action 10: Improve delivery of assistance to disaster victims by streamlining registration, expediting eligibility decisions, tracking movements of displaced victims, and incorporating safeguards against fraud.**

All three breakout groups discussed Specific Action 10 to some extent, indicating its relative importance in the total recommendation rubric. The following sections describe points that were made during all three breakout group discussions.

Participants felt that improving disaster assistance delivery is important in recovery but not as important as concerns about immediate health and safety. State, tribal, and local officials should be involved at the front ends of discussions to improve delivery of assistance to disaster victims. Participants pointed out that this action has implications for several ESFs and should be considered in that regard.

*Improving a System that Works*

Participants generally felt that FEMA provides public assistance and individual assistance well, and that there is no need to reinvent the wheel (i.e., let the NRP and NIMS work). Participants suggested that DHS determine what the problem is first before trying to fix it. As an example of efforts to fix something that may be working, participants pointed out that moving away from tele-registration is a step back and contradicts the recommendation to use 21st Century technology. It was noted that not all states have had problems with tele-registration. Are we changing a system that works due to its failure during a catastrophic event? Participants suggested that plans should be made for backup systems when existing systems are overloaded.

Participants also urged that discussions to improve delivery of assistance to victims should emphasize multi-agency responsibility at the federal level. Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are already in place; FEMA should expand their capability by bringing in other agencies (i.e., HHS) and educating these agencies on how to use such facilities. Participants were highly skeptical that abrogation of operational control for individual assistance to HHS was an improvement over the current plan. Because of their lack of confidence in HHS' abilities to effectively carry out this function, most group members urged FEMA to resist this recommendation.

*Timing and Resources*

Some participants felt that it would not be possible to have staff trained by June 1 on all programs. It is worth while to look at how benefits can be cascaded down, but that cannot be completed in the next eighty-five days.

Furthermore, some participants felt that state benefits staff needs greater resources if they are also disseminating disaster funds. Others suggested that states should be allowed to use the existing HHS grant stream to develop these types of services.

*“Single Encounter”*

Several participants expressed discomfort with the idea of a human services “single encounter” for victims. They suggested that entities should be co-located but that services do not need to be

provided by the same agency that likely could not rapidly become experts in all of the disciplines involved in individual care and assistance. They also suggested that involvement of multiple agencies may be necessary to ensure against fraud. Some states have tight oversight given that they will pay twenty-five percent of the assistance provided in their state so concentration of this function in a single entity would conflict with this practice.

### *Generic Disaster Registration Form*

As an alternative to the single encounter fix, many participants recommended that DHS develop a common assistance form that does not have the words “Small Business Administration” (or any other single agency identifier) on it. They suggested that the form be called the Disaster Registration Form and all agencies would then get the information off the form and the victims would not have to continually supply the same information on each new form or computer screen. In improving the current system, one challenge is related to how the Privacy Act is an impediment to rapid data and information sharing between agencies and local service providers.

### *Disbursement of Assistance*

States also suggested that identifying how to get Medicaid, Medicare, and other services to displaced people in the event of a disaster is a critical near-term activity for the federal government. Other participants mentioned that although not all states have the core competencies to disburse assistance, states with those capabilities could be reimbursed to execute this function during a disaster.

### *Reimbursement of State Expenditures*

While participants expressed appreciation that Specific Action 10 was included in the Report, they also pointed out that many people have been displaced as a result of Hurricane Katrina mass evacuations to which state officials had to respond “on the fly.” Should a hurricane hit the Gulf Coast on June 2 of this year, states will be dealing with new cases in addition to those they are still handling from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Reimbursements are an important aspect of this issue. State governors are making public statements about how much they are spending on Katrina relief and that the federal government will not reimburse them. The recommended solutions must anticipate how this situation will affect future responses from states, cities and towns.

### *Clarification of Recommendation 71*

Several stakeholder expressed support for a system of tracking shelter and temporary housing residents as described in recommendation 71<sup>10</sup>. States accepting evacuees found it challenging to keep track of people to provide adequate support. Development of policies, procedures, and technologies to track impacted and evacuated citizens assisted during the response is critical to future efforts. HHS could play a key role in helping to track displaced people.

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<sup>10</sup> Recommendation 71: DHS should develop a system to maintain awareness of the movement of shelter and temporary housing residents. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 108)

**Specific Action 11. Enhance on-going review of State evacuation plans and incorporate planning for Continuity of Government to ensure continuation of essential and emergency services***Overemphasis on Mass Evacuation*

Two breakout groups discussed Specific Action 11. Many participants expressed discomfort about federal review of state and local evacuation and law enforcement planning. There was also a strong sense that this action item was an example of over-reaction to Katrina. Comments were made that federal agencies are placing too much emphasis on evacuation and that Congress and state legislatures are focusing on evacuation as an election year issue. Such attention misinforms the public and sets unrealistic expectations.

Mass evacuation is not a realistic scenario for many types of disasters. Thus, forcing states and localities to spend DHS grants on mass evacuation planning diverts resources from planning for more realistic scenarios. Many agreed that there do need to be specific evacuation plans for the families of state, tribal, and local emergency responders when mass evacuation is appropriate. The military has a good system that could serve as a model. Overall, DHS needs to handle the mass evacuation issue carefully and the public should be educated on the issue.

**Additional Recommendations:** In addition to the eleven Specific Action items described in chapter seven of the White House's Report, DHS asked for feedback on four specific recommendations in the White House Report which they also deemed to have near-term implications. One breakout group discussed those five recommendations, and brief highlights of those discussions are captured below.

**White House Recommendation 1: DHS should establish an interagency team of senior planners with appropriate emergency management experience to conduct a comprehensive, 90-day review of the NRP and the NIMS.***Collaboration with State and Local Agencies*

Participants felt strongly that state, tribal, and local officials should be included on the interagency team. They said that changes made by federal officials can snowball into significant "catch up" work for state and local agencies. Including state and local perspective could help to minimize such "snowballs" and help to target effort where it is needed the most.

*Federal Knowledge and Execution of NIMS/NRP*

Participants also felt that the NIMS is well-practiced at the state, tribal, and local level and functions as it should. Some participants suggested that federal agencies need to be properly trained to use the system that is already in place. To facilitate such training, the NRP needs to be boiled down to something more digestible. As it is now, it is too much to absorb. Most group members saw the old Federal Response Plan as friendlier in that regard. One participant said that if people in the system understand the concept of matrix leadership, the system will work.

*Realign ESFs to the NIMS structure (Recommendation 1b)*

Some participants were concerned that recommendation 1b<sup>11</sup>, to realign ESFs to the NIMS structure, would introduce needless changes into the existing ESF concept which already works without them. They pointed out that emergency response and incident command are two separate functions. ESFs should be fit to an overall coordinating structure, not changed to fit NIMS. The text should be changed to acknowledge the difference.

**White House Recommendation 4: DHS should develop and implement Homeland Security Regions that are fully staffed, trained, and equipped to manage and coordinate all preparedness activities and any emergency that may require a substantial Federal response.**

*Regional Approach*

Participants strongly agreed that a regional approach is critical. A regional approach builds relationships and the strength of pre-event relationships is a good predictor of the response. DHS regions should be based on the existing FEMA regions and include a DoD coordination element. Participants also agreed that the regional preparedness coordinators should serve as the PFO/FCO. They will know the state and local people and understand resource deployment issues better than someone from Washington, DC.

*Other Comments*

As reflected in the “Key Themes” discussion and in the specific action discussion, participants felt confident preparedness coordination through DHS’s FEMA arm would work. Attempts to develop and direct preparedness through other federal arms were not viewed as having a high probability of success. Others agreed that every level in the chain of command should have the authority to unlock an additional set of resources.

**White House Recommendation 6: The PFO should have the authority to execute responsibilities and coordinate Federal response assets.**

*Roles, Responsibilities, and Authority*

Participants expressed strong opinions that the NRP must better describe and communicate roles and responsibilities of the PFO. If the PFO is primarily a policy role and not a coordination role, that distinction needs to be clear. Based on the Katrina experience, many problems emerged when the PFO tried to take on coordinating roles. The approaches used were ineffective and were not backed up by years of relationships with people on the ground. Many agreed that the recommendation should replace “PFO” with “FCO.” Many participants also agreed that the

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<sup>11</sup> *Recommendation 1:* DHS should establish an interagency team of senior planners with appropriate emergency management experience to conduct a comprehensive, 90-day review of the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

*b)* Realign Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to NIMS structure (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. p. 88)

person in charge should be a career employee, not a political appointee without the proper experience and training.

Participants raised several other concerns about the implications of this recommendation. One said that the recommendation is an attempt to bring the PFO into non-Stafford Act, non-INS events, which impinges on state sovereignty. Also, if the PFO, FCO, and state people disagree, who has the authority to make the decision? Others suggested that coordination would be more effective if the regional director were also the PFO and if the FCO were granted contracting authority. This issue was the single most recurrent theme in the day's discussion.

**White House Recommendations 11 and 15: DHS should establish a permanent standing planning/operations staff housed within the National Operations Center. Establish a National Operations Center to coordinate the national response and provide situational awareness and a common operating picture for the entire Federal Government.**

#### *Roles, Responsibilities, and Authority*

Breakout group members agreed that if FEMA tries to centralize logistics nationally, the system will not work and that the regions should have a larger role. While it might be useful for the Regional Operations Centers (ROCs) to report to the National Operation Center (NOCs), the decisions that regions can make before having to go to the NOC need to be clearly spelled out. If the ROCs do not have any authority, ROCs are not useful and should not be implemented. Breakout group members asked whether the regions would have information fusion responsibilities and that DHS how information flow should work in a steady state system versus during an incident.

#### *Collaboration with Stat, Tribal, and Local Agencies*

Participants said that if the intent is for the NOC to act as the single point through which information is directed, state and local representatives need to be involved. The perspective of first responders is critical here. Also, some states are starting to collaborate regionally on information fusion. Others noted that states are developing their own logistics capabilities but that they need assistance with warehousing. They suggested that DHS collaborate with those efforts instead of forcing the states to abandon their efforts in favor of a DHS engendered solution.

#### *Develop Guidelines on Credentialing*

The need to have pre-determined credential standards for responders, particularly medical personnel, is an important issue that has been underscored by Hurricane Katrina and recent preparedness exercises. DHS should encourage state and local governments to develop consistent guidance and standards. In the absence of such guidance, states will develop inconsistent credentialing systems that are difficult to coordinate in a national emergency.

#### *Provide Notification when Exercising Immediate Response Authority*

Participants explained the need for state, tribal, and local notification when DoD exercises Immediate Response Authority (IRA) in appropriate circumstances (e.g., saving life and limb)

without a request from local authorities. (Note: this is a particular concern related to recommendation 23<sup>12</sup>).

### Process Suggestions

In addition to discussions of the specific actions and associated recommendations, participants in the breakout group discussions raised several process issues for consideration by DHS.

*Sharing AARs* - A participant pointed out that three super-regional AARs are being completed in the Gulf Coast States and suggested that DHS obtain copies of these reviews. This participant also mentioned that Louisiana officials are conducting an AAR for their state.

*Tracking Implementation* - A participant asked how the White House will ensure follow-up and implementation of the Report's recommendations. DHS and White House participants explained that an implementation matrix will be developed, and that the White House will hold weekly meetings at the Deputy Secretary level to assess progress with implementation of the recommendations. Participants asked that state, local, tribal, and territorial governments be included in implementation of specific actions, including in the review of any revisions to the NRP.

*Public Expectations* - Participants noted that the White House Report does not address public expectations with regard to timing of implementation of the Report's recommendations. Because state and federal response during the 2006 hurricane season will be watched with such scrutiny, states and DHS should work together to explain to first responders and the general public what is being done to implement the Report's recommendations. They should clearly explain what actions are being carried out with regard to implementing recommendations before June 1, the official start of hurricane season, along with the implication of these actions for people in hurricane areas. The message should also explain that not all recommendations can be implemented by June 1.

### Afternoon Plenary: Breakout Group Reports and Discussion with Secretary Chertoff

Following a brief break to allow the breakout groups time to finalize their reports, the participants reassembled in plenary session.

Secretary Chertoff (DHS), Acting Under Secretary Paulison (FEMA), and Ken Rapuano (White House Council on Homeland Security) participated in the afternoon plenary discussion. Prior to the breakout group reports, the senior federal officials addressed the participants and offered their views of the importance of the state/tribal/local input to the overall effort that government was taking to improve DHS operations in general and disaster operations in particular.

**Secretary Michael Chertoff** recognized that while most emergencies or disasters are not on the scale of Katrina, Rita, or Wilma, the vital lessons learned from analyzing federal performance during those events and implementing improvements had broad implications for government

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<sup>12</sup> Recommendation 23: DOD and DHS should plan and prepare for a significant DOD supporting role during a catastrophic event. (The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned, p. 94)

response to all types and scales of disasters. In response to concerns expressed during the morning discussions that one of the outcomes of the report would be an attempt to “re-organize emergency management on a national scale,” he emphasized that emergency management properly begins at the local and state level. In the reviews and recommendations he looked for critical actions that could “retool” the federal response effort and make them more effective and supportive of those at the state and local level.

**Ken Rapuano**, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and the senior liaison from the White House team concurred with the Secretary’s view on the intent of the review and the meeting. He expressed his thanks to the participants for devoting their time to meeting and his appreciation for the helpful input that DHS would get from participants throughout the day in strengthening the implementation of the recommendations.

**Dave Paulison, Acting Under Secretary of FEMA** echoed his colleagues’ remarks, thanking the meeting members for giving their time and attention to the effort. Acting Under Secretary Paulison assured participants that the group’s recommendations and review of the report would be used to improve FEMA’s operations and performance.

Connie Lewis, Senior Partner, Meridian Institute, began the report-out by providing a brief review of the common themes and key issues that carried across all breakout groups. The common themes identified by Ms. Lewis are as follows.

- *Involve tribes, states, localities in every step.* This includes development and implementation of recommendations, particularly as they impact the NRP. The non-federal partners identified a need for specific involvement mechanisms (e.g., inclusion on NRP review team) and would like agencies and the White House to assume a *partnership* (not parenting) model for federal – state relationships.
- *Build on what already exists.* There is no need to start over from scratch with the NIMS and NRP. Focus should be given to improvement, coordination, and integration to avoid disrupting the good things already in place.
- *Do not relate everything to a Katrina-like event.* Not every occasion for disaster or emergency response is on the scale of a catastrophic event. In addition, there are critical differences between states that have implications on their planning and support requirements.
- *Ensure adequate funding*

Each of the three breakout groups then presented their highest priority issue(s) with discussion following each. The groups each had one slide to support their remarks and asked one of the breakout group members to comment on their behalf. In some cases, other members from the breakout group offered supporting remarks.

**Group 1:** This group focused their report on the need for clear, seamless communication and its direct relationship to effective command and control (Specific Actions 1 and 3). They concurred with the White House Report that the goal for disaster response communications was the ability to support informed, coordinated command and control decisions by state, tribal, local, and

federal decision-makers (unified command). Such seamless and effective command and control in the face of multiple jurisdictions and intergovernmental overlap can only be achieved through common operating pictures gained from reliable communication and information systems. This clearly supports government focus on obtaining rapidly deployable communications that make use of staging points to compensate for distance and remoteness of operations; these systems can replace destroyed communication systems, or supplement and augment existing systems which remain in service in the disaster operations area. Concomitant with the tools needed to support seamless and effective communications is a clear understanding of the command and control and reporting structure and the roles and responsibilities associated with them (e.g., it is imperative that the states know as soon as possible who the FCOs and PFOs are for their areas/regions so that some of the command, control, and communication issues that occurred during Hurricane Katrina can be remedied prior to June 1, 2006).

Under Secretary Foresman pledged that DHS would pre-identify FCOs and PFOs so states and communities know their point of contact thereby enabling them to address potentially contradictory command structures, and participate in scenarios and exercises. He concurred with the group that the longer the government waited to clarify roles and responsibilities, the greater the risk that the same weaknesses will exhibit themselves again during hurricanes and other potential emergency situations this year.

Group 1 also emphasized the importance of having the right tools on the ground where they are needed. While clarification of the command structure and reporting lines themselves were crucial for improvement of performance, the group emphasized that if states do not have the tools, there will still be no means of achieving preparedness and response goals.

Finally, the group urged the federal officials to be proactive in framing public expectations about the implementation of the recommendations between now and June 1. Public confidence has already been weakened by events surrounding Katrina. The government must help them (particularly those in the hurricane states) have realistic expectations that improvements are being made rapidly and effectively, while not painting unrealistic expectations that all of the weaknesses have been mitigated or eliminated. Unrealistic expectations of improvement could be more damaging than apathetic expectation of no improvement.

Secretary Chertoff acknowledged the importance of this issue and noted that he fully expects state and federal response to be scrutinized and believes that they will perform well.

**Group 2:** This group focused primarily on recommendations which would improve “on the scene” deployment of response and assistance personnel, services, and goods (Specific Actions 5, 7, and 11). This group stressed to the senior federal officials and other meeting participants the following key themes:

- There is nothing wrong with the NRP or NIMS: it is a good plan. They suggested that DHS clarify critical roles and responsibilities (principally the ambiguity and overlap regarding the PFO and FCO) and communicate these roles and functions so actions can be implemented effectively. They also suggested that the federal government stop revising and changing the NRP except for the PFO/FCO role clarification. They remarked that constant change and

revision is confusing and prevents responders and decision-makers from being trained to competency in roles and responsibilities. The group asked if there is a plan in place for this.

- The PFO and his or her team should be assigned immediately so they can be integrated into preparedness and response plans (for the Gulf States, they suggested naming the PFO next week).
- States need to incorporate and practice receiving evacuees and displaced persons as much as they practice dispatching and evacuation. This includes planning, training, and exercising for mass care on the scale of Katrina and Rita. The group also suggested developing plans in advance for receiving a certain number of evacuees and submit those plans to DHS
- Response plans should include plans for working closely with the private sector (specifically companies such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot that have exemplary supply chain, logistics, and dispatch resources). The group commented that plans should not rely on all resources coming through government channels.
- Some changes in funding issues would improve preparedness and response, particularly in the short term. Those changes include changing the funding formula from being based on terrorism threats and hazards and move truly toward an all-threat formula. In addition, states' basic FY06 funding should be released now instead of waiting until mid-year; this would help with assessment, communication, preparedness and prevention measures.
- Federal review of preparedness and response plans (e.g. evacuation plans), should occur once per year in an integrated fashion rather than in series with different agencies conducting independent and non-integrated reviews. For example, states are concerned about a proposed DOT review of transportation plans and a DOJ review of evacuation plans for law enforcement and criminal justice reasons. These appear to be cumbersome reviews that will promise additional expense at both federal and state levels and result in no real added value.
- Federal requirements should explicitly recognize the differential importance of evacuation planning for states. There are almost no credible scenarios for evacuation in some states; those states would be better served spending resources in other areas (e.g., planning for receiving evacuees from other states).

Secretary Chertoff acknowledged the group's concern regarding the negative impact of wholesale revision of the NRP and emphasized that DHS also intended to make only critical revisions to the plan. He said that there might be some adjustments to the NRP but DHS was not anticipating a major revision of the plan. He did feel that the NRP needed immediate revision on two issues based on the Katrina performance analysis: 1) clarifying general language to reduce perceived ambiguities and increase its "user-friendliness," and 2) clarifying specifics for Katrina-scale catastrophic events.

**Group 3:** This group described the importance of DHS regions and regional JFO's in improving on-the-scene operations. The group stressed that the regional system is critical but that regional infrastructure must be in day-to-day use for the system to be effectively operational when large-scale events arise. Based on the history that has built up around the FEMA regions for

emergency preparedness and disaster response, members of Group 3 urged that FEMA regions should be strengthened and operated as multi-agency “JFO’s.” The group stressed that new regional structures should not overlay what is already there. The group said DHS should build on existing FEMA regions and their functions and strengthen them to eliminate gaps. Further, DHS should act immediately to implement regional structures because states are forming their own regions in the absence of federal leadership. Timely action and implementation on DHS’s part would reduce formation of unnecessary and redundant functions and eliminate the resulting overlap and confusion.

In addition, as part of an effort to clarify regional roles and function, Group 3 felt the DHS Regional Director should also be the PFO in the case of emergency declarations on that scale.

As with Group 2, Group 3 emphasized that there is not a great deal that needs to be changed in the NRP, but that the federal government must address the gap in understanding *how* to implement the plan. This group also thanked DHS officials for the opportunity to participate in the meeting and stressed their desire for more, regular opportunities to interact at this level on specific issues. States and associations want to stay involved in this process and offered to provide personnel to help DHS in making necessary changes and implementing the improvements.

Group 3 reported that there was some concern among state and locals that DHS was seeking to federalize the disaster response process to gain the control necessary to avoid some of the failures and weaknesses observed in the interagency-intergovernmental efforts responding to Katrina. State representatives felt uniformly that such a move was contrary to traditional federal-state roles and would also be ultimately unproductive in improving overall emergency management and disaster response.

Secretary Chertoff concurred that the process should not be federalized, but was also concerned that we improve the overall system to ensure that when the federal government is called on for assistance, it is enabled to perform effectively.

Finally, the group addressed current regulatory funding constraints which severely limit or prevent federal “reimbursement” of state and local expenses for preventative or anticipatory preparedness actions. The significant question remains regarding how states will fund repeated episodes of getting prepared for a potential disaster that does not materialize (as sometimes occurs).

Secretary Chertoff agreed this was a troublesome limitation that was also being examined. In the near term, he felt that DHS and states needed to work together to determine what actions could be delayed until 24-48 hours before an event and what anticipatory actions absolutely needed to be executed early (such as preparing hospitals and nursing homes). He mentioned that he believes an integrated decision approach should reduce some of the later controversy over reimbursements.

Following the close of the group reports and discussion Under Secretary Foresman expressed his thanks for thoughtful analysis and candid responses of the participants. In reaction to the range of issues discussed, he made a number of commitments on behalf of himself and his staff at DHS.

1. By Wednesday, March 15, he and his staff would make a recommendation to the Secretary regarding release of FY06 funds.
2. He expressed appreciation that everyone in the room had been committed to working on the way ahead while drawing on but not limiting themselves to what has happened in the past; and he committed to the participants that they will continue to be involved as true partners.
3. Under Secretary Foresman reiterated to the Secretary his pledge made to the group in the morning session that his personal performance contract would include implementation of the Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned recommendations.
4. Under Secretary Foresman also agreed that the path forward did not include reinventing national preparedness and recovery, but should focus on continuing down the preparedness continuum and incorporating the lessons we have learned.

Secretary Chertoff thanked Under Secretary Foresman for his personal commitment and agreed that DHS would likely be tested this year but reaffirmed his confidence that the department and its staff would perform well.

Following the departure of Secretary Chertoff, Acting Under Secretary Paulison, and Mr. Rapuano, Under Secretary Foresman discussed with the group the feasibility of bringing state, tribal, and local officials to Washington, DC for 10-20 days at a time (on a “rolling” basis) to work on implementing the short-term recommendations as much as possible by June 1. Representatives from the state/tribal/local groups and associations responded they would be happy to come personally or supply the expert staff from their organizations to work in DC with DHS on implementation. However, they also urged Under Secretary Foresman to continue to hold regional meetings “mirroring” this meeting’s format. Participants felt that such regional meetings were critical to enabling the states to also understand challenges faced by the federal side in implementing the improvements and lessons learned. Participants also reminded that such follow-on meetings would continue the process of independent, expert review and evaluation, thus, giving even this group’s views “a reality check.”

### **Commitments and Next Steps**

Following Under Secretary Foresman’s final comments, Dr. Lesnick led the group in a review and capture of action items.

- Meridian will draft a meeting summary (this document) for distribution to all participants.
- DHS will distribute electronic copies of the materials from this meeting (including a table identifying all the ESFs and which federal agency is the lead).
- States and other entities who were conducting their own reviews and lessons learned will send copies of their reports/AARs to Tina Gabbrielli.
- DHS will finalize a plan for continuing to work with meeting participants on developing and implementing recommendations, including a plan for convening “tiger” teams of

federal and state personnel to work implementation of specifically identified short-term actions/recommendations.

- Under Secretary Foresman will send his recommendations regarding release of FY06 funding to Secretary Chertoff by Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Undersecretary Foresman will include effective implementation of these recommendations in his performance contracting with Secretary Chertoff.

Following additional expression of thanks for participation and hard work, Under Secretary Foresman adjourned the meeting.

## Appendix A: Agenda

**Stakeholder Summit**  
**Department of Homeland Security**

***Location: The Westin Arlington Gateway***  
**Second Floor**  
**801 North Glebe Road**  
**Arlington, VA**  
**Friday, March 10, 2006**  
**8:30 am – 4:30 pm**

**AGENDA**

8:00 – 8:30 am      Registration and Coffee

**PLENARY SESSION**

8:30 – 8:45 am      Welcoming Remarks      *Under Secretary for Preparedness  
George Foresman*

8:45 – 9:30 am      Overview of Lessons Learned      *Tina Gabbrielli*  
From Hurricane Katrina      *Director of Contingency Planning and  
Support Division*

9:30 – 10:00 am      Plenary Discussion on      *Facilitator*  
Recommendations

10:00 – 10:15 am      Break

**GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

10:15 am – 2:15 pm      Group Breakout Sessions      *Group Facilitators*  
and Working Lunch

2:15 – 2:45 pm      Break and Return to Plenary Session

**PLENARY SESSION**

2:45 – 4:00 pm      Group Breakout Session Reports      *Group Panel Presentation*  
  
Dialogue and Discussion with  
Secretary for Homeland Security  
Michael Chertoff

4:00 – 4:30 pm      Summation and Discussion of Next Steps

**Appendix B: List of Acronyms**

AAR	After Action Review
DCO	Defense Coordinating Office
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DRC	Disaster Recovery Center
EOC	Emergency Operating Center
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FCO	Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRP	Federal Response Plan
HHS	Health and Human Services
JFO	Joint Field Office
JTF	Joint Task Force
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOC	National Operations Center
NRP	National Response Plan
PFO	Principal Federal Officer
TCL	Target Capabilities List
UTL	Universal Task List